

# The Classical Bulletin

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No. 5

## The Quarrels of the Ancients and the Moderns

Teachers of the classics realize the value of setting aside an occasional hour in the classroom to increase their students' interest in some phase of classical culture other than the purely grammatical or literary. Now, even non-Irishmen will admit that there is scarcely anything more interesting than a fight. One fight that might engage the attention of the student of Latin and Greek is the perennial quarrel of the ancients and the moderns. There are curious side-lights cast upon this controversy in the works of some little known authors.

A Norman troubadour of the thirteenth century, Henri d'Andeli, gives in his poem, *The Battle of the Seven Arts*,<sup>1</sup> an engaging description of the condition of classical learning in his century. Speaking in a general way of the value of this work, Professor Paetow says in his preface: "In this age, when so much is said for and against the ancient classics, this long forgotten record of a similar interest in the thirteenth century should be pondered by all those who are interested in the literary treasures of ancient Greece and Rome and in the history of their preservation and influence on modern civilization."<sup>2</sup>

The battle described in this poem centers round the rivalry of the two great mediaeval universities of Paris and Orleans. Paris is the shrine of Logie and regards the humanists of Orleans as "mere grammar-boys" (line 8). On the surface this does not seem to set the scene for the traditional quarrel between ancient learning and modern science; it seems rather a dispute between philosophy and the study of classical literature. A little consideration of the nature of logic in those times removes this misconception. It was only at the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth that the great body of Aristotle's works was made available to the mediaeval teachers of philosophy. Those who adopted the new logic, the new physics, and the new metaphysics, were known as the "moderns" of their period. As William of Tocco, the first biographer of St. Thomas Aquinas, insists in the *Acta Sanctorum*, St. Thomas was one of those outstanding innovators. He was a "modern" in the science of his time. So were many others at Paris, and these men constituted the group who challenged the supremacy of the traditional teachers of the classics. Henri d'Andeli pictures the marshalling of the army of the ancients outside the city of Orleans:

Grammar is much wrought up;  
And has raised her banner  
Outside of Orleans, in the midst of the grainfields;

There she assembled her army.  
Homer and old Claudio,  
Donatus, Persius, Priscian. (21-26)

Logie, too, musters her forces. Sundry knights under her banner are collected on the famous hill of Ste. Geneviève, armed with the trivium and quadrivium:

There was master John the rustic,  
And Pointlasne, he of Gamaches,  
Master Nicholas with the prominent buttocks.  
These three put the trivium and quadrivium  
In a tub on a large cart. (52-56)

In their several characteristic ways, Law, Divinity, Medicine, Necromancy, Astronomy, Arithmetic, Geometry, Madam Music, and others attacked the army of Grammar. The "moderns" try all their tricks, and yet

The authors (ancient) defended themselves  
And struck them great wounds,  
With penknives and styluses,  
Long fables and lies. (250-253)

The fight waxes hot and eventually a pupil of Dame Logie is sent to treat for peace with Grammar. Alas, the poor logician—

He did not know the sense  
Of the presents nor the preterits;  
The boy did not know how to come to the point;  
And came back in shame. (377-378, 392-393)

Finally, Grammar is depicted as withdrawing undefeated to Egypt, her birthplace, and leaving the field to Logie for a time:

For thirty years this will continue,  
Until a new generation will arise,  
Who will go back to grammar,  
Just as it was the fashion  
When Henri d'Andeli was born,  
Who gives it us as his opinion  
That one should destroy the glib student  
Who cannot construe his lesson;  
For in every science that master is an apprentice  
Who has not mastered his parts of speech. (452-462)

That the quarrel did not stop as early as Henri had predicted, is known to every student of history. It broke out in a literary way in the seventeenth century with Swift's *Battle of the Books* and other works of the same kind in England.<sup>3</sup> France, in the same period, witnessed a similar fight between classicists and modern experimentalists. Many eminent French scholars engaged in the dispute. Boisrobert, Desmarests de Saint-Sorlin (*Traité pour juger les poètes grecs, latins et français*),

Boileau, Dacier, and dozens of others made it the most discussed question of their age.<sup>4</sup> Charles Perrault expresses the moderation of an interested onlooker in the dispute:

La belle antiquité fut toujours vénérable,  
Mais je ne crus jamais qu'elle fut adorable;  
Je vois les anciens sans plier les genoux:  
Ils sont grands, il est vrai, mais hommes comme nous;  
Et l'on peut comparer, sans crainte d'être injuste,  
Le siècle de Louis au beau siècle d'Auguste.<sup>5</sup>

And yet this moderate view was that of a man who knew no bounds in exaggerating the importance of his own century. To chasten and balance the judgment of Perrault, the opinion of a well-known English educationalist of the previous century is sufficient.

For therein I am of Quintilian's opinion, that there is fewe or none auncient warke that yeldethe nat some frute or commodie to the diligent reders. And it is a very grosse or obstinate witte that by readyng moche is nat some what amended.<sup>6</sup>

St. Louis, Mo.

VERNON JOSEPH BOURKE

NOTES

1. *La Bataille des VII Arts*: translated into English as *The Battle of the Seven Arts*, A French Poem by Henri d'Andeli, edited and translated by Louis John Paetow. University of California Press; 1914.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.
3. See: R. F. Jones, *The Background of Swift's Battle of the Books*, Publications of Washington University, (St. Louis, 1920).
4. See: Hippolyte Rigault, *Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, (1856).
5. Charles Perrault, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand*, (1687) (lines 1-6).
6. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Goverour*, (1st ed. 1531). Everyman's Library, p. 61, (N. Y., Dutton, 1907).

A Note on *Theaetetus*, 172-177d

There is no myth in the *Theaetetus* to relieve its "barren logomachies," or, more properly, to adorn what Professor Shorey calls its "inimitable dialectical subtleties." Yet the *Theaetetus* is noted for its seeming failure to solve the problem of knowledge. When the solution has been approached from several points, the discussion is terminated, in vain it seems, save for the advice which *Theaetetus* receives to go on philosophizing, soberly, modestly, and gently. In such circumstances we might easily be led to expect a myth in the course of the search for the definition. "After bringing his argument," Professor Shorey writes, "to the point of proof ὡς χρὴ φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι" (*Euthyd.*, 275a), and after pointing out the true method and discipline of sound philosophizing, he always takes refuge amid a cloud of metaphors in some beautiful myth of which he can only say θεὸς δέ πον οἶδεν εἰ ἀληθῆς οὐσία τυγχάνει (*Rep.*, 517b)." (*AJP*, ix, p. 281). Plato, in other words, fashions his myths in such wise that he uses his finest rhetorical and poetic powers to drive home those ethical considerations which he had so much at heart.

Plato was hardly unaware of the ethical import of the solemn word: *veritas est aeterna, inviolabilis, incommutabilis*. More than once he has given testimony to the ethical importance of this sacred eternity of truth. (Cf., for example, *Rep.*, vi and vii, and *Phaedo*, 82c ff.) He might be unable to give a clinching and complete answer to Protagoras, Heraclitus, and the rest; he might fall short of establishing a definition and a decisive measure of knowledge of his own. But he did know that to be a good man one must measure one's knowledge and its truth by something far above matter, and something which the senses alone cannot attain. For this reason, I think, he pauses in the midst of the refutation of Protagoras, to assure us once more—in the famous digression, lovely as any Platonic myth—that for the *fidelis servus et prudens* all knowledge and truth are measured according to an eternal, inviolable, incomutable verity—*ἐπέχεινα τῆς οὐσίας*.

The clever man of business, he implies, immersed in the things of this world, does not measure truth in this fashion: for him the eye is filled with seeing and the ear with hearing; sense-perception is knowledge, at least knowledge enough for him, and he is content to be borne along by the Heraclitean flux. And so he will be clever, indeed, at the grosser things of sense, at flavoring a Welsh rarebit or composing a fawning speech; "but knows not how to wear his cloak like a gentleman; still less with the music of discourse can he hymn the true life aright which is lived by immortals or men blessed of heaven." (176a, *Jowett*).

Matter and untruth and ignorance, all these are evil things. And if man can only rely on the matter-bound faculties of sense, then his lot is an evil one indeed. There is only one remedy for this, Plato thinks, to flee from mere matter and its untruth and its ignorance to the verities which are sacred and eternal, "to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can." (176a, *Jowett*). And he expands his myth-like expression with a thought of unfathomable sublimity: φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ δότον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι (176b).

Does it not seem rather unfortunate that we call these sublime thoughts a digression, a pious reflection, an old man's restful sentiment? Like every other dialogue, like the whole of Plato's philosophy, the *Theaetetus* deserves to be seen in "orbed completeness." Plato's profound intuition saw easily and clearly that ethics makes shipwreck along with metaphysics if the mind cannot attain with certitude to truth, to truth inviolable, incomutable, eternal. The *Theaetetus* is a patient study to define clearly, or at least to prepare to define, such truth and knowledge. Real truth leads to the highest Being, fruitful knowledge leads to His service, to assimilation to His wondrous beauties. This is the lesson which the famous digression strives myth-wise to drive home. It is something more than a digression; it is almost the heart of the dialogue.

St. Louis, Mo.

CHARLES J. O'NEIL, S. J.

**The Syntax of Greek Subordinate Clauses**

The accompanying summary of Greek subordinate clause syntax has proved an aid in teaching the fourth-year high-school class at Creighton during the past year, and may be of assistance to some of the BULLETIN's readers. Each student was given a mimeographed copy of the summary, and the text-book was practically abandoned while these rules were being studied. Not all the matter, of course, was new; much had already been seen in the first year of Greek, but all the clauses were included in the summary, so as to give a conspectus of the whole and provide a rapid means of reference and review. The summary showed its chief value in composition work.

To one already acquainted with Greek syntax the outline is self-explanatory. But a word must be said about the abbreviations *HOPU*, *HOPS*, and *HOPI*. *H* and *P* have to do with tenses; *O*, *U*, *S*, and *I* with moods. *H* stands for *historical*, *P* for *primary*; *O* for *optative*, *S* for *subjunctive*, *I* for *indicative*, and *U* for *mood unchanged*. Thus *HOPU* in the section on Indirect Discourse means: If the tense of the main verb is an historical tense (*H*), the mood of the verb in indirect discourse will be the optative (*O*); if, on the other hand, the verb is a primary tense (*P*), the mood in the indirect statement remains what it was in the direct—unchanged (*U*). The parenthetical (*hupu*), in the same section, means that occasionally, even after an historical tense, the mood of the direct statement remains unchanged in the indirect (*hu*). The parenthesis (acc.) means that the subject of the infinitive is not expressed when it is identical with that of the main verb.

**1. Conditional Sentences**

- A. SIMPLE: —— εἰ + Ind.—Ind.
- B. C. FACT  $\begin{cases} \text{Pres. : } \varepsilonἰ + \text{Impf. Ind.} - \text{Impf. Ind.} + \ddot{\text{a}}\text{v.} \\ \text{Past: } \varepsilonἰ + \text{Aor. Ind.} - \text{Aor. Ind.} + \ddot{\text{a}}\text{v.} \end{cases}$
- C. FUTURE  $\begin{cases} \text{Vivid: } \dot{\varepsilon}\dot{\alpha}\dot{\nu} + \text{Subj.} - \text{Fut. Ind.} \\ \text{Vague: } \varepsilonἰ + \text{Opt.} - \text{Opt. w. } \ddot{\text{a}}\text{v.} \end{cases}$
- D. GENERAL  $\begin{cases} \text{Pres: } \dot{\varepsilon}\dot{\alpha}\dot{\nu} + \text{Subj.} - \text{Pres. Ind.} \\ \text{Past: } \varepsilonἰ + \text{Opt.} - \text{Impf. Ind.} \end{cases}$

**2. Indirect Discourse***(Never change the tense)***A. MAIN CLAUSE:**

- a) λέγω  $\begin{cases} \ddot{\text{o}}\text{u} + \text{HOPU} \\ \text{hupu} \end{cases}$

Never change *past ind.*  $\begin{cases} \text{or optative} \end{cases}$  w. *dd̄v.*

- b) φημί & words  $\begin{cases} \text{of thinking} \\ \text{& believing} \end{cases}$  (acc.) w. *infinitive.*

- c) Words of *mental*  $\begin{cases} \text{& sense perception} \end{cases}$  (acc.) w. *participle.*

**B. SUBORDINATE CLAUSE:**

HOPU  
(hupu)

- a—After secondary tense  
subj. with *dd̄v* or without *dd̄v*  
= *opt.* without *dd̄v.*
- b—Never change *past. ind.*  
in Contrary to Fact.

**3. Indirect Questions***(Never change the tense)*

HOPU  
(hupu)

**4. Relative and Concessive Clauses**

- A. With *definite* antecedent: *Constructions of independent sentences.*
- B.  $\begin{cases} \text{With } \text{indefinite antecedent} \\ \text{Concessive Clauses} \end{cases}$   $\begin{cases} \text{Rules of} \\ \text{conditions.} \end{cases}$  (neg. μή)

**5. Temporal Clauses**

- A. *Actual pres. or past event—IND.* ( " oὐ)
- B. *Otherwise—Rules of conditions.* ( " μή)
- C. until  $\begin{cases} \dot{\varepsilon}\dot{\omega}\dot{\varsigma} \\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\dot{\omega}\dot{\iota}\dot{\iota} \end{cases}$  (def. past action)—IND. ( " oὐ)
- $\begin{cases} (\text{oὐ})\pi\dot{\omega}\dot{\iota}\dot{\nu} \\ \text{before—π\dot{\omega}\dot{\iota}\dot{\nu} + (acc.) w. infinitive.} \end{cases}$  (otherwise)—Rules of conditions. ( " μή) ( " μή)

**6. Result Clauses**

- note / INF.—result (whether fact or not)  
/ stated not as fact, but as *tendency*  
/ anticipated ( " μή)  
possible
- IND.—result as an actual fact. ( " oὐ)

**7. Purpose Clauses**

(Introduced by *ἵνα*, *όσ*, *οπως*) ( " μή)  
HOPS

**8. Object Clauses**

- A. After verbs of *caring*  $\begin{cases} \text{or} \\ \text{striving} \end{cases}$   $\begin{cases} \text{οπως} + \text{Fut. Ind.} \\ \text{οπως} + \text{HOPS} \end{cases}$  ( " μή)
- B. After verbs of *fearing*: μή + HOPS ( " μή oὐ)

**9. Causal Clauses**

- A. *Writer's reason—IND.*  $\begin{cases} \text{οπως} + \text{Fut. Ind.} \\ \text{οπως} + \text{HOPI} \end{cases}$  ( " μή)
- B. *Another's reason—HOPI* ( " μή oὐ)

*Omaha, Nebraska*

A. M. RIECKUS, S. J.

Our generation associates education with books—with books about books, or abstracts of books about books: the latter, in Platonic phrase, being fully three times removed from the truth.—W. Hobhouse

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## Editorial

Although the tendency of the modern age has been to ever greater specialization of knowledge, it remains true, nevertheless, that classical studies have maintained their position of honor in the Catholic high school and college not as subjects of specialization, but as the tried instruments of a sound and broad humanistic education. It can safely be presumed, therefore, that teachers working in this tradition and in whole-hearted sympathy with it are deeply interested in the humanistic movement of our own day, so closely associated with the names of Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and other American writers of note. The most recent and the best book on this movement is undoubtedly *The Challenge of Humanism*, by Louis J. A. Mercier, which has lately issued from the Oxford University Press, New York. It would be difficult to praise too highly the author's keen analysis of the essence and the implications of a sane and complete humanism, his comprehensive grasp and lucid presentation of the historical backgrounds of humanism, his invaluable summaries of the work of Babbitt, Seillière, and More in combating naturalism and defining the humanistic ideal, his systematic presentation of the philosophic basis of humanism, and his sympathetic and helpful discussion of the relation of humanism to religion and especially to Christianity. Mr. Mercier's book is not light reading; it is freighted with profound thought and challenges real thinking on the part of the reader. But it would be a pity if the very excellences of the book—its depth and vast sweep—were to stand in the way of its being widely read and pondered by thoughtful people of every station. But educators with faith in the classics, in literature and philosophy, can surely not afford to deprive themselves of the inspira-

tion and the profit to be derived from this outstanding book of the year 1933. The CLASSICAL BULLETIN wishes Mr. Mercier ever increasing success in his brave championing of humanism in a naturalistic age, and bespeaks the most heartfelt co-operation with him on the part of all its readers. Our teachers in high school and college can do much to further the cause of humanism by means of the influence they wield over their pupils and the parents of their pupils. If they will take the time and expend the effort necessary to read and digest *The Challenge of Humanism*, they will have a more complete understanding of the reasons why they are teachers of the humanities, and a fuller realization of the possibilities and responsibilities of their position.

Next year (1935) will mark the bimillennium of Horace's birth. We are not of the number of those who worship Horace or his Epicurean philosophy of life. Still we believe that the present age can profit much by a revival of interest in the great Latin poet and his work. Horace has endeared himself to the centuries by his broad and sympathetic humanity, his quiet philosophy of common sense, his noble patriotism, and his conscientious and perfect artistry. If it were only for his matchless mastery of form, the twentieth century might well devote a little serious attention to the re-reading of his lyrics. The CLASSICAL BULLETIN hopes, with the help of its readers and friends, to contribute its mite towards celebrating the Horatian bimillennium worthily. Hence it solicits, even at this early date, materials, studies, and appreciations which may promote a deeper understanding and more intelligent love of the bard of Venusia.

We recommend to our readers an article by G. R. Elliott in *The American Review* for November and December, 1933, entitled "The American College."

We are happy to print in the present issue a Latin translation of the first three paragraphs of Bishop John Carroll's "Eulogy on George Washington," from the pen of the well-known Latinist, Father A. F. Geyser, S. J., of Campion School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. No doubt many of our teachers will be glad to have a Latin number on their program for Washington's Birthday, February 22.

With truth has it been said that reading and writing constitute a liberal education if one is taught what to read and how to write.—*Agnes Repplier*

. . . Two names remain, the greatest of all in their effective accomplishment for Rome and for mankind: Virgil, the prophet and joint founder of the Roman Empire, the poet to whom all other poets after him have paid allegiance; and Cicero, the great civilizer of language, the creator, once for all, of European prose.—*J. W. Mackail*

## Guasintonii Laudatio Funebris

in a. d. VIII Kalendas Martias

MOES virorum singulari ingenio,  
summa virtute,  
eminenter in patriam meritis paeclarorum,  
quotiescumque luctum publicum atque maerorem postulat,  
mitigari illa quidem solet cum cogitamus  
orbitatem nostram,  
quamvis sit gravis atque doloris plena,  
tamen non esse pro rursus irreparabilem;  
fierique posse,  
ut, quod illorum mors eripuit,  
ab aliis nobis suppeditetur,  
in quibus quidem par ingenium  
cum pari rei publicae studio atque vigilantia sit coniunctum.

Quod cum cogitamus,  
spe ericti abstergemus lacrimas,  
quibus tumulos virorum vita funectorum,  
virtute olim insignium,  
maestri perfundimus.

Nunc vero nullum nobis tale solacium suppetit;  
neque enim quisquam est,  
qui, quamvis magnam animo spem conceperit,  
audeat civibus promittere rursus aliquem esse futurum,  
in quo tot virtutes,  
tam splendidae,  
tam utilis faustissime socientur,  
quam eae fuerunt, quibus ille enituit,  
cuius memoria ad gratos tenerosque commovemur sensus,  
eiusque sepulchrum, hoc ipso die,  
ritu sollemni, ut par est, honoratur pietate.

Sive nimur quae nos ipsi experti sumus recolimus,  
comparando cum GUASINTONIO nostro  
quemvis huius aetatis hominem  
ingenio virtute meritis excellentem,  
sive rerum antea gestarum perscutamur monumenta,  
ut pari gloria virum reperiamus,  
pari iusti verique amore insignem,  
non possumus, si verum quaerimus, non agnoscere,  
in universi generis humani annalibus inveniri neminem,  
qui virtute illum aut supererit aut saltem adsequatur,  
neminem, dico,  
tot, tam arduis, tam variis muneribus funetur,  
qui moriens secum tulerit nomen  
tam non immodica ambitione deformatum,  
tam non iniuriis illatis aut crudelitate maculatum,  
nomen, dico,  
tam non aut segnitie attenuatum,  
aut cunctando debilitatum,  
aut minoribus illis vitiis obumbratum,  
quae cum natura humana  
nescio quo modo coniuncta esse videbantur,  
donec Providentia Divina  
singulare suppeditavit exemplum GUASINTONII.

Hanc morum praestantiam  
quae lingua rite describere,  
quae facundia digne potest eloqui?

Nihilo minus, cives lectissimi,  
ex attentissimis animis vestris colligere mihi videor,  
quanto opere hoc illi a me paeconium tribui desideretis.

Vestra enim in patrem illum pietas,  
vestra adversus optimum amicum tenera reverentia  
exhortari me videntur,  
ut vestro nomine debile saltem proferam testimonium,  
quo ostendam,  
quam indelebili grati animi sensu illius prosequamini merita,

quam immortali memoria verecundiaque  
eximias illius artes recolatis.

Quae cum ita sint,  
vestro ego nomine thuris quasi grana quaedam  
tamquam honoris et reverentiae signa  
illis addere audeo,  
quae ubique in Civitatibus Foederatis  
ab omnibus, qui huius rei publicae favent felicitati,  
hoc die offeruntur.

## E Schola Campiana

A. F. GEYSER, S. J.

## To Sappho Sorrowing

The virgin snows grow dark beneath our feet,  
The iris withers that our fingers press;  
The sweetest wines no more are tasted sweet,  
Nor honey sweet, when we have had excess.

Grieve not that men would call you passion's tool:—  
Harsh fingers often strike the softest lyre;  
Rough hands may sometime stir the silent pool,  
Or faint sparks blaze dry meadows into fire.

Boston, Mass.

GEORGE O'BRIEN, S. J.

No one would rank Ovid as equal to Tibullus or Propertius in sincerity of feeling. He is shallow and repeatedly flippant. Yet it is the truth that Ovid's influence upon literature at large has, beyond all reckoning, outrun theirs. He abides as a testimony to the power of the narrator. The world always listens to a story well told.—J. W. Duff

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Caesar and Tacitus—A *Concordia Discors*

It is an interesting experience to interrupt a session with Tacitus by reading something from Caesar and to punctuate the "Annals" by a couple of books of the "Gallie War." Reading Tacitus means living in the atmosphere of passages like this:

Interea barbari catervis decurrentes nunc in vallum manu-alia saxa, praeustas sudes, decisa robora iacere, nunc virgultis et cratibus et corporibus exanimis complere fossas, quidam pontis et scalas ante fabricati inferre propugnaeulis eaque prensare, detrahere et adversum resistentes communis niti. Miles contra deturbare telis, pellere umboibus, muralia pila, congestas lapidum moles provolvare. His partae victoriae spes et, si cedant, insignitus flagitium, illis extrema iam salut et assistentes plerisque matres et coniuges earumque lamenta addunt animos (IV, 51).—

while the following treatment of a similar situation might be taken as typical of what one finds in Caesar (I, 26):

Ita aincipiti proelio diu atque acriter pugnatum est. Diu-tius cum sustinere nostrorum impetus non possent, alteri se, ut cooperant, in montem reperunt, alteri ad impedimenta et carros suos se contulerunt. Nam hoc toto proelio, cum ab hora septima ad vesperum pugnatum sit, aversus hostem videre nemo potuit. Ad multam noctem etiam ad impedimenta pugnatum est, propterea quod pro vallo carros obiecerant et e loco superiore in nostros venientes tela coniecebant, et nonnulli inter carros rotasque matarae ac tragulas subiciebant nostrosque vulnerabant. Diu cum esset pugnatum, impedi-mentis castrisque nostri potiti sunt.

Listened to in such close succession, the two narrators cannot but leave a remarkable impression of contrast. There is in the two passages all the difference between a dashing ride down a rapids-filled stream, and a journey down a river whose current is powerful, but steady and quiet. In the first passage you are a courier who in breathless sentences is panting out his report; in the second, you are rather the general himself inditing a clear, careful account, to be sent back to the senate. Here are two men, both historians, both noted for their brevity and variety and vigor, as set over against the Ciceronian manner—and yet, how they contrive to differ in their similarities! *Concordia discors!* One cannot but feel a pricking curiosity as to what lies at the bottom of such a state of affairs.

Brevity, variety, and intensity—these, in the search for an explanation, will prove three good hooks on which to hang all the main differences. Caesar and Tacitus have common ground in these qualities, and at the same time, conveniently enough, it is in these also that they differ. In the matter of brevity, for instance—if, after reading the two passages, you were asked to say which of the two authors was the briefer, could you give an unqualified answer? If you said, "Tacitus," I should reply, "And yet, as a matter of fact, in narrating any given event Tacitus uses an appreciably larger number of words than Caesar." Thus the passage from Caesar is the story of a whole battle, of a whole day's battle; that from Tacitus, using just as many words, is but the cross-section of a few intense moments. The explanation

lies in the fact that Tacitus is more the picture-painter than Caesar, and makes more use, in consequence, of the details of a scene. So that if we were speaking of brevity of content, of the swift, straight march of sentences toward their goal, we should have to put down, as one of the differences between Caesar and Tacitus, the former's greater brevity. In another sense, of course, Tacitus is the briefer. If we look to what might be called brevity of style, to economy in words, we shall have to speak of Tacitus' greater brevity. For in the passage from Tacitus, it is quite easy to point out a half dozen unique economies in the use of words, which it is quite difficult to match in Caesar. There is, for example,

1. The absence of any connectives (Asyndeton):
  - (a) between the three objects of *iacere*;
  - (b) between the infinitives marking the clauses of the sentence: *iacere, complere, inferre*, etc.
2. The use of the one verb *provolvere* for the two objects *pila* and *moles lapidum*, each of which should properly have its own verb (Zeugma).
3. The use of the one word *partae* to take the place of a whole clause, such as, *quam iamiam assecuturi erant*: a unique case of pregnant expression.
4. The absence of any expressed object for *deturbare* and *pellere*. You must understand and supply it. A mild case of Tacitean ellipsis.
5. *Resistentes* takes the place of a relative clause; and, again, between *his* and *illis* the conjunction is missing.

Whether Tacitus' greater brevity of diction made his a superior style, or whether it had the opposite effect, is another question—and probably an insoluble one. At any rate, the double meaning lurking in the word brevity, when applied to the two writers, has been dragged to the surface, and with it one reason for that first sharp impression of difference in similarity.

The ferreting out of differences in variety is more complicated. There is a very definite feeling, to start with, that Tacitus is much more varied; but there is the no less definite fact, which insists on getting in the way, that in the reading, Caesar keeps his freshness equally well with Tacitus; and this readability is a crucial instance, as Bacon might say, of the presence of variety. Freshness is not achieved solely by variety, but it is not achieved without variety. Quite antecedently to any analysis, one could be sure that a high degree of variety belonged to a passage of such cool, flowing freshness as the following one from Caesar (I, 8):

Ex opere perfecto, praesidia disponit, castella communit, quo facilius, si se invito transire conarentur, prohibere posset. Ubi ea dies, quam constituerat cum legatis, venit, et legati ad eum reverterunt, negat se, more et exemplo populi Romani, posse iter ulli per provinciam dare et, si vim facere conentur, prohibitum ostendit. Helvetii ea spe deieci, navibus iunctis ratibusque compluribus factis, alii vadis Rhodani qua minima altitudo fluminis erat, non numquam interdiu, saepius noctu, si perrumpere possent, conati, operis munitione et militum concurso et telis repulsi hoc conatu destiterunt. Relinquebatur una per Sequanos via, qua Sequanis invitis, propter angustias viae, ire non poterant.

Or, if one did pause to analyze, one would only find one's judgment confirmed. There are long periodic sentences, short, direct ones; sentences beginning with an adverbial clause, with a prepositional phrase; sentences with the subject at the head, with the object, with the verb—sentences of all kinds, made into a varied whole, that is withal smooth and natural, unmarred by any strained devices.

By the test of readability and analysis Caesar is proved to possess a high degree of variety. Whence, then, that sharp impression of a considerable superiority in this matter in Tacitus? It must be due to foreign elements present in the Tacitean variety; and following that hint we find at least two such elements, which have to be carefully sifted out. First of all, there is tone-variety. Caesar holds pretty steadily to a straight narrative tone, while in Tacitus the orator is continually breaking out into passages of far greater emotional intensity than we moderns consider compatible with the proper historical manner. This gives Tacitus a greater range within which to vary; for while Tacitus can, and often does, write in the tenor of the passage quoted from Caesar above, Caesar rarely, if ever, writes in the explosive manner of the passage quoted from Tacitus.

Next, we must distinguish the element of unexpectedness in Tacitus, which is not a matter of variety at all, properly speaking, but for that very reason needs to be carefully isolated. To use an analogy, you see that a bend in the stream is coming up ahead, and from all indications it will be to the right; but when you reach it, you find it is to the left. In itself a bend to the left is no more a change from the previous course than a bend to the right would be. The fact that you are not surprised by the variation does not make it any the less a variation. Surprise, as such, has nothing to do with variety. And so, when Caesar, having begun one sentence with the main verb, *Relinquebatur una per Sequanos via*, begins the next with an adverbial clause, *His cum persuadere non possent*, the structural change is none the less a gain in variety because you saw the bend coming and were borne around it so smoothly. Conversely, when Tacitus, after saying (*Ann. I, 63*), *legiones reportat*, describing the preparations of a general, changes in the very next phrase to *pars equitum iussa (est)*, (from active to passive voice with change of subject), the unexpectedness of the change, strictly as such, does not add anything to the variety.

The two distinctions so far made are not a matter of hair-splitting. Those two elements have to be isolated, if one's judgment is to be intelligent. In regard to tone-variety, the question might arise, whether an historian ought not purposely to limit his emotional range, so that such limitation would not be a defect in Caesar; or whether, at any rate, since this is a disputed point, such variation of tone ought to be allowed to weigh in comparing the two authors for variety.

There is left, then, the species of variety which was noted in Caesar, and which I shall take the liberty of calling simply variety of style. I mean the mere mechanical diversification of words and clauses and sentences.

This is a quality that can be demanded unconditionally from every author, and on it the readability of a writer absolutely depends.

How do Caesar and Tacitus compare in variety of style? If they are equal, or nearly so, the early paradox will be explained away. And, as a matter of fact, they are very nearly equal. For where Tacitus is more varied in style, it is only by that margin which irregularity has over regularity. Caesar employs all the meanings of words, and all the forms of sentence combination which accepted usage allowed him; but Tacitus gives himself considerable freedom in departing from accepted usages. With that freedom comes a mathematically greater possibility of achieving varied combinations. Tacitus pours disconnected words into fantastic moulds; Caesar cements brick to brick according to an accepted pattern. The difference in the possibilities of variety is evident.

I use the metaphor derived from masonry designedly; for with a little development it will enable me to drive home two important points. Suppose a road, down which you are travelling, to run between two walls of such contrasting masonry. Now it is true that in the beginning the one wall is continually exciting your surprise by its unexpected formations and by its continual changes; but as you go on and on, that impression becomes duller and duller, until the irregular wall wears an aspect scarcely less familiar than the other, even though still very different from it. Something like this happens in the case of Tacitus, when one reads a great deal of him. Irregularity puts on a kind of regularity, and Tacitus strikes one less and less as being unusual. His ellipses in thought; his omissions of connectives, and of not a few other parts of speech; his peculiar arrangement of words; his new words—they all recur over and over again with a certain sameness, which I have never analyzed, but which I am sure is there because we expect the exceptions, after a time, and read along with appreciably greater ease and sureness. That is a result which can arise only if there is some sort of internal order, at least, in what are at first baffling departures from customary forms. This is evidence, to me at least, on two important points: first, it confirms the fact that the degree of real variety in Caesar and Tacitus is pretty much the same, ultimately; and, secondly, it helps to show that such expressions of the critics as "Tacitus' morbid straining after variety," are not a fair description of his style. What Tacitus did was to found a style of his own, and after that he was not "straining" to be different, but simply endeavoring to be consistent. That he was successful in this is proved by the phenomenon remarked above. Even his inconcremity, (though here I should be prepared to waive a point), comes within the pale of that defense.

But why invent a new style? That is another question upon which I ought perhaps not to enter here; but I cannot bring myself to believe that his motive was a mere desire to be different. The style he created is too effective; it enabled him to achieve effects too admirable, to have been born of such a superficial motive.

No; the only sufficient reason for what some consider the greatest of Latin prose styles is simply this: Tacitus sought an instrument fit to convey his thoughts in the sharp and strong, bolt-like way he had come to think them, and in which he wanted his reader to think them—and he created it.

The differences of Caesar and Tacitus on the score of intensity are clear-cut and on the surface; no distinctions are needed here. Nor does it require much study to perceive that these differences play a considerable part in producing that first general impression of dissimilarity between the two writers. Of page after page in Tacitus it can be said: "Caesar never writes thus: so feelingly, so breathlessly, so bitterly, so censoriously." Two elements, the emotional and the critical, make up what I may call the greater intensity of Tacitus. They might also be said to constitute the greater subjectivity of Tacitus. For whereas Caesar writes in as objective and dispassionate a style as he can, in order to win the fuller confidence, Tacitus, without concealment or control, writes of things as Tacitus conceives them and as Tacitus feels about them. He is either growing excited over his theme, writing rapidly, making his words hurry and leap and crash; or he is voicing his "ethical passion," as Allen aptly describes it, in pithy observations on life, or in biting criticisms of the times.

"They accused Marellus," he says in the latter strain, "of retailing unfavorable anecdotes about Tiberius"; and adds, in parenthesis, *inevitable crimen*: "a charge sure to win the accusers a condemnation" (*Ann. I*, 74). The same touch of scorn is found in: "They added still more honors . . . as later flattery generally does" (*Ann. IV*, 9); and in: "At Rome consuls, senators, and knights were rushing into slavery" (*Ann. I*, 7). These are scarcely objective statements. Indeed, the last is one of Tacitus' numerous metaphors; and a metaphor is of its very nature subjective, a presentation of a fact as transformed by the mind and emotion of the narrator.

His reflective utterances are not always caustic. Sometimes they are softly sad. Germanicus (called "Caesar" in the passage) fights his way to the vicinity of the fatal forest in which the ill-starred Varus and his legions had been trapped and from which they had never emerged; and Tacitus says: *Igitur cupido Caesar- em invadit solvendi suprema militibus ducique, permoto ad miserationem omni qui aderat exercitu ob propinquos, amicos, denique ob casus bellorum et sortem hominum* (*Ann. I*, 61). That last phrase, which does not seem quite to be in place, but an afterthought, as though the writer had been carried on past the intended end of the sentence into a deeper reverie,—in that phrase is the sound, far-off and faint, as though heard in a sea-shell, of an ancient murmur, as ancient as Homer and Genesis, the never-ceasing, sorrowful murmur of an exiled mankind.

Of Tacitus' "excited" style scores of examples leap from his pages. Here is a whole battle in three sentences.

Sed Germanicus cedentem in avia Arminium secutus, ubi primum copia fuit, evehi equites campumque, quem hostis

insederat, eripi iubet. Arminius colligi suos et propinquare silvis monitos vertit repente; mox signum prorumpendi dedit iis quos per saltus occultaverat. Tunc nova acie turbatus eques, missaeque subsidiariae cohortes et fugientium agmine impulsae auxerant consternationem; trudebanturque in paludem gnaram vincentibus, iniquam nesciis, ni Caesar productas legiones instruxisset; inde hostibus terror, fiducia militi, et manibus aequis abscessum. (*Ann. I*, 63.)

Event follows event with sharp, hammer-like impact: an impression furthered not a little, no doubt, by the labial alliteration in the verbs. It makes one feel as though one were tumbling head over heels down-hill, getting terribly out of breath, but having no time to take another. Caesar, too, tells of battles swift and fierce; but his way of telling is not this excited, breathless way.

Amongst other characteristically Tacitean passages in point, there is one which is unique. About five miles north-east of Rome, at Fidenae, Tacitus says, a new amphitheatre had been constructed. The builder was a certain Atilius, a freedman, who had sought the permission to build it *non abundantia pecuniae nec municipali ambitione, sed in sordidam mercedem*. *Adfluxerunt avidi talium*, Tacitus goes on to say, *virile et muliebre secus, omnis aetas, ob propinquitatem loci effusus; unde gravior pestis fuit, conferta mole, dein convulsa, dum ruit intus aut in exteriora effunditur immensamque vim mortalium, spectaculo intentos aut qui circum astabant, praeceps trahit atque operit*. And a cloud of dust rises slowly into the still air. You stare, shake yourself; then proceed to dig out your own mental composure, for it went crashing down with the ruins. "This is the lever you pull for a nose-dive," the pilot said, as he pulled it. And some time later you "come to" sufficiently to know that it is all over: *atque operit*. The effect is always the same, no matter how often you read the passage. It is as though you had been inspecting a "Big Bertha," and your guide had been saying, without any preliminary change in his regular expository tone, "Now, the discharge of this type of gun is effected by pressing this button here . . .," and with the words had gone on actually to press the button, when all you were expecting, at least just then, was a mention of the operation. *Unde gravior pestis fuit*, Tacitus had been saying in a tone of quiet narration, when suddenly—totter, crash, ruin—there is a blast of ablatives absolute and vivid presents, and *operit*.

The purpose of this paper has been to increase understanding of both Caesar and Tacitus; for it is always a distinct step in one's knowledge of an object when one comes to know that object's opposite.

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It is to get at the spirits of men that the university is created: to my mind it is not to make scholars.—*Woodrow Wilson*

The business of a tutor is to make himself superfluous.—*French Aphorism*

